Setting determines time, place, and tone in fiction. Throughout the early parts of the book, Hawthorne makes comparisons between his time and Hester Prynne’s time. As a reader, you ultimately compare your time to that of the characters.

Directions: In groups of three, look at the following quotation from the novel and explain what Hawthorne is saying about the difference in attitudes between his time and Hester’s. Then take it a step farther and think about your own time. Come to a consensus, and then write a two-paragraph statement below to be presented to the class.

“The discipline of the family, in those days, was of a far more rigid kind than now. The frown, the harsh rebuke, the frequent application of the rod, enjoined by Scriptural authority, were used, not merely in the way of punishment for actual offences, but as a wholesome regimen for the growth and promotion of all childish virtues.”

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| **Hawthorne’s Time Period** | **Hester’s Time Period** | **Your Time Period** |